

Boost Your RSI

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↑ Boost Your Regular & Substantive Contact

Boost RSI Before the Semester Begins!

Spring semester is almost here! While you know that RSI is important during the semester, did you know that you can RSI can start *before* the first day of instruction? Pre-course contact is an effective way to welcome your students and create a positive presence in your course. As many of your students may be new to online learning, a warm, friendly greeting will establish you as a real person and an instructor who is present and accessible. Additionally, an early offer of support can help ease students' anxiety before the course begins. Explore the tips below for increasing RSI with pre-semester contact.



Pre-Semester Contact Tips

☛ **Change the start date for your course to open your course before the semester start date.** You can publish your course early while keeping modules locked or future content unpublished. This way, you can allow students early access to your syllabus, welcome module, and Homepage. [Learn how to change the start date in this Canvas guide.](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-change-the-start-and-end-dates-for-a-course/ta-p/452354#) <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-change-the-start-and-end-dates-for-a-course/ta-p/452354#>

☛ **Use Announcements to send a Welcome Letter before the semester begins.** This Announcement can welcome your students, establish a comfortable class environment, introduce the class syllabus, schedule, and protocols, and establish a weekly routine. Sending a pre-semester Welcome Letter will also save you time by proactively anticipating student questions and needs before the term begins. And it will save students time by providing them with the answers they need to help them prepare for your class. **Heads Up:** Your course must be published first for the Announcement to send and for Canvas to push it to students' district emails. **Bonus:** In Commons, search for "RCCD Welcome Module with Add-ons & Resources" to import the module that includes Welcome Letter examples and templates.

☛ **While you're at it, add regular content-based announcements to send throughout the semester using the "delay release" function to set up their publication date.** A little work upfront will help you boost RSI throughout the semester. [Here are some tips for upping your RSI with Announcements.](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/effective-announcements) <https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/effective-announcements>. **Heads Up:** Reusing Announcements is efficient, but you'll need to recreate them so that your name and profile info are attached to them when they send. Otherwise, they are sent from "U" or "Unknown Sender" and will likely end up in your students' spam folders. [See accordion below for steps to refresh copied announcements each semester.]

☛ **Set up and publish your Homepage.** Consider including important course information to help orient students, such as your communication plan, your preferred name/pronouns, getting started information, quick links to content, evergreen resources, and Canvas how-to and support information. This information will welcome students by providing them with the information they need to settle in and navigate your course. **Bonus:** Inside Canvas, you can create a new Homepage in less than 15 minutes using a DesignPLUS template. [See accordion below or watch this quick tutorial to learn how to use this template and see how it will [align your Homepage with the OEI Course Design Rubric](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/oei-course-design-rubric-workshop-series) <https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/oei-course-design-rubric-workshop-series>.]

☛ **Make a liquid syllabus available to students.** Want to learn more? [Learn about the benefits of the liquid syllabus and how to create one in Canvas.](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/liquid-syllabus) <https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/liquid-syllabus>. Read the [December 2022 DE newsletter](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/december-2022-district-de-newsletter?wrap=1) <https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/december-2022-district-de-newsletter?wrap=1>, which included an article detailing how to make a DEV shell public, so you can make course information available to all potential students before they've enrolled in your course.

Explore the accordions below for walkthrough guides to get started with these pre-semester contact ideas!

How to Access DesignPLUS Templates

Click on the embedded VoiceThread to view a step-by-step walkthrough. Advance through each step at your own pace.



How to Access DesignPLUS Templates

Distance Education



Additionally, learn more about how the DesignPLUS templates can help align your course content to the OEI Course Design Rubric and watch recorded hands-on template workshops on our [OEI Course Design Rubric Workshop Series page](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/oei-course-design-rubric-workshop-series) (<https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/oei-course-design-rubric-workshop-series>).

Want help importing the template? Or adding your existing content? Scroll to the bottom of the newsletter to make an appointment with a Course Developer. Let us help you import and set up this template!

★ This walkthrough was made using [VoiceThread](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/voicethread) (<https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/voicethread>) and [Snagit](https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/snagit) (<https://rccd.instructure.com/courses/25048/pages/snagit>).

How to Ensure Announcements Aren't Spam

How to Set a Front Page as a Course Home Page

Making a Canvas page into a Home Page is a two-step process: First, you'll **Set a Page as a Front Page**, then you'll **Choose the Home Page** to be the Pages Front Page. Follow the steps below for both processes.

Set Page as Front Page

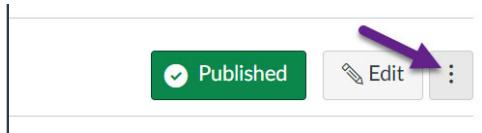
- Open or create a Canvas Page you'd like to use as a Home Page.
- Publish the Page. This allows you to set it as a Front Page.
- Click on the three dots in the top right of the Page [screenshot 1].
- On the popup menu, click "Use as Front Page" [screenshot 2].
 - At the top of the Page, you will now see a grey box indicating the Page is now the Front Page [screenshot 3].
- **Note:** You can only have one (1) Front Page per course.

Choose Home Page

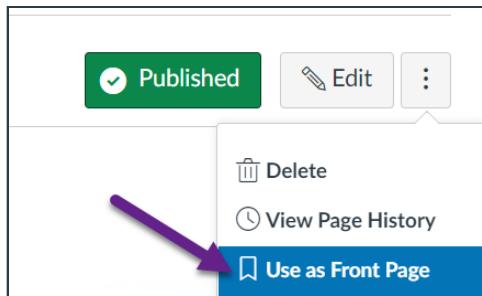
- Click on "Home" in the course navigation menu.
- On the right of the Page (or the bottom of the Page, depending on your dynamic display), click the "Choose Home Page" button [screenshot 4].
- On the "Choose Course Home Page" popup window, select the "Pages Front Page" option, and the name of the Page you selected as your Front Page will display. Then, press Save [screenshot 5].
- Click on "Home" in the course navigation menu to be taken to your new Home Page.

Screenshots for Setting Page as Front Page

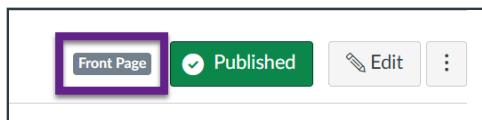
Screenshot 1



Screenshot 2

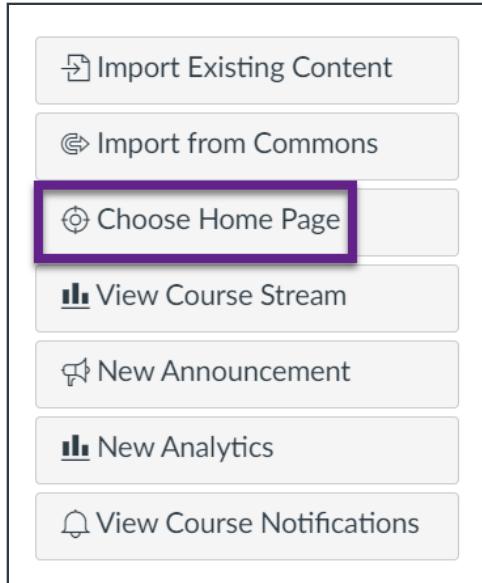


Screenshot 3



Screenshots for Choosing Home Page

Screenshot 4



Screenshot 5

